



Going for Gold: M/M Olympic Anthology

E.M. Lynley (Editor) , Kaje Harper (Contributor) , Sarah Madison (Contributor) , Nico Jaye (Contributor) , K-lee Klein (Contributor) , Whitley Gray (Contributor) , Annabeth Albert (Contributor) , Kelly Rand (Contributor) , more... Michael P. Thomas (Contributor) ...less

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It's not hard to see the outward appeal of the Olympic Games: watching the fittest and most-accomplished athletes in the world compete—generally with fairly skimpy uniforms. Voyeurism aside, there's nothing sexier than a beautiful body running, jumping, swimming, rowing, and a couple dozen other activities. Who wouldn't take the chance to enjoy the spectacle?

But the Olympics are more than just a chance to watch athletes at the peak of physical perfection. Every competitor at the Games has a story behind why they run or jump or swim, and why they compete. How they got to the Games, and what they sacrificed along the way to make the cut. To spectators, they may perform superhuman feats, but each and every one is human in the same way we all are.

In this collection of stories, you'll find there's a lot more to competing at Olympic level than being the best in one's field. Expectations and pressures from family, friends, coaches and country add up, and sometimes it's only the love of the right man who can make the effort worth it. And sometimes, love is more important than going for gold.

Including:

Hot Shots by Michael P. Thomas

Into the Deep by Nico Jaye

The Quad by Kelly Rand

Lightning in a Bottle by Sarah Madison

Swimming the Distance by Annabeth Albert

Shoot for the Gold by Whitley Gray

An Olympic Goal by K-lee Klein

Tumbling Dreams by Kaje Harper

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From Reader Review Going for Gold: M/M Olympic Anthology for online ebook

Natalie says

3.5 stars. I've been going through Olympics withdrawal (no more pretty boys in Speedos on my TV, *pout*), so this anthology comes along at the perfect time. There is a wide variety of sports represented here, and the writing ranges from OK to great. By far, my favorite story was Annabeth Albert's "Swimming the Distance," about a closeted athlete struggling to hold on to the man he loves. It's sweet and touching and hot (three words: full body shaving). It looks like this is a brand-new author, and I hope she writes more soon. Also notable is "Tumbling Dreams" by Kaje Harper, where a gymnast has to make some tough choices about his future and his best friend. As with most anthologies, I didn't love every story, but there should be something here for everyone.

FlibBityFLooB says

3.5/5 stars for overall anthology. A mixed bag for me, but definitely not a bad anthology of stories focusing on the olympics.

I would probably break down the stories into three groups.

My favorites:

Hot Shots by Michael P. Thomas

Swimming the Distance by Annabeth Albert

For these, I felt like they really made the characters interesting and worthy of a much longer story. i liked the angst involved in the relationships, especially with the authors able to make me dislike some of the characters behavior, yet still like the characters in the end. Always impressed when an author can lead me like that :) I haven't read either of these authors before, but I will be looking up to see what else they've written.

I enjoyed:

The Quad by Kelly Rand

Into the Deep by Nico Jaye

Tumble Dreams by Kaje Harper

Not bad reads. Tumble Dreams almost got me a little teary.

Not really able to capture my interest:

Lightning in a Bottle by Sarah Madison

Shooting for the Gold by Whitley Gray

A Olympic Goal by K-lee Klein

I can't necessarily pin-point why these stories didn't really do anything for me. I just wasn't as interested in them as the others, I guess. Go figure.

Liz (Bugetta) says

I figured this was the perfect time to finally read this! I will Review as I go:

Hot Shots by Michael P. Thomas - not sure about this one. I've tried reading a couple times and the narrator bugs me. I'm not giving up yet...

Into the Deep by Nico Jaye - Smuffy goodness. 4*

The Quad by Kelly Rand - This was really good. The only winter games story. I loved the atmosphere of the story and the MCs. I wanted more! Maybe a follow up at the 2018 Olympics? :) 4*

Lightning in a Bottle by Sarah Madison - I think this is my first Sarah Madison story and now I need more! I really liked her writing. It had a plot like I've seen a lot but she set it against a sport I know almost nothing about which kept it from feeling "been there, done that." I liked the MCs too and would love to read more about these guys. 4*

Swimming the Distance by Annabeth Albert - 4*

Shoot for the Gold by Whitley Gray - 4*

An Olympic Goal by K-lee Klein

Tumbling Dreams by Kaje Harper - This was heartbreaking but so good. Kaje just kills me every time! I watched the mens individual all-around after I read this and kept thinking about all the the injuries they must have and the 4.5*

Kaje Harper says

This anthology is the first I've participated in. And when it released last Friday I realized something I hadn't taken into account. Suddenly I was nervous not just about my own story, ("Please, let some readers really like it...") but also about a group of other stories over which I had no control at all. ("Pretty please, let the whole collection be worth the purchase!!")

I got my copy Saturday, and I didn't read it right away. I had very good reasons... okay, I wimped out. But last night I finally picked it up. About three pages into the first story, I laughed out loud. And then I relaxed. It was good, it was really good :)

This collection has something for everyone. You'll find young teenage novices and experienced veterans, playboys and first-timers; straining bodies, cold slick ice and sweaty horses. There is humor and drama, sweetness and angst. (I contributed some of the angst - are you surprised?)

Is it perfect? Hell, no. But it's a collection I'm proud to be part of and there are some stories in here I will definitely reread. And that's a relief. I hope other readers enjoy it as much as I have.

Marge says

The best thing about this anthology is that the stories are all LONG, most of them novellas actually, so we get to know the characters and like them enough to feel their pain and joy. I also liked that the stories most often were about how our characters were working their way to the Olympics, and the obstacles they had to overcome to get there. Don't worry, there's plenty of competition and heartbreak in all the stories, and not all of it in their love lives.

jules0623 says

The highlights:

The Quad by Kelly Rand

Lightning in a Bottle by Sarah Madison

Swimming the Distance by Annabeth Albert

Tumbling Dreams by Kaje Harper

SueM says

Just a warning, anthologies really don't do much for me (and if it hadn't been for Bingo Challenge, I probably wouldn't have chosen to read this), so I am biased negatively towards the stories. That said, let's continue...

Hmm, this set of stories were rather a mixed bag - some didn't do anything for me, while a few shone like the gold in the title.

Going with the positives first, the final story, *Tumbling Dreams*, by Kaje Harper, was definitely worth waiting for. With her usual polished style with strong emotional connections, her story was easily my favorite - 4 stars (which is about as high as I go for an anthology story).

Next best for me was Whitley Gray's *Shoot for the Gold*, which, despite a few little factual things that didn't quite ring true (doctor-patient medical ethics, and some comp details), had a good emotional connection that worked for me - 3.5 to 4 stars. Sarah Madison's *Lightning in a Bottle* also had its flaws (like how Jake took 4 years to think of Rich's medical bills) but again, the emotional connection wasn't bad on the whole.

An Olympic Goal by K-Lee Klein, *Swimming the Distance* by Annabeth Albert, and Nico Jaye's *Into the Deep* all were reasonably solid reads - 3 to 3.5 stars.

As I'm now down to 2 stories, I won't say a whole lot... *The Quad* by Kelly Rand, which was 'meh' for me after an appearance of the miracle cure BJ - 2.5 to 3 stars. *Hot Shots* by Michael P Thomas, is the first story in the anthology, and the one I found least likeable; the main character is a selfish guy who makes a half-hearted turn-around, while some of the timing of events seem off to me - 2-2.5 stars.

Cassandra Carr says

Personally, I love stories about athletes who are gay. We all know in today's society it's not always accepted to be gay and yet good at sports, and that these guys have particular challenges in keeping their personal lives private. Add to that the pressure from being an elite athlete expected to perform at the highest levels and you've got an explosive situation. The anthology has a good range of different Olympic sports, ages, etc displayed. If you're looking for an excellent read, try out this anthology!

Tamela says

Enjoyed most of the stories. I do like anthologies. And add in sports hotties and the Olympics!!!

Julia says

My favorites in here were Hot Shots, Into the Deep, Swimming the Distance, and Tumbling Dreams, easy five star reads. The thing that makes this anthology great, though, is that all the stories were wonderful. I look forward to reading more from all the authors involved in this project.

Crissy Morris says

4.5 stars

Originally reviewed for Joyfully Jay

I have a thing for athletes – chiseled physiques, intense focus, sweaty and glistening. And Olympic athletes? Well, they take that to a whole different level. So it should be no surprise that I jumped at the chance to read about beautiful Olympians and the men that they are in a relationship with. Because a man at the top of his game athletically is sure to be at the top of his game in other aspects of his life, right?

This anthology is comprised of eight stories from eight talented authors. It includes sports from shooting to equestrian sports to swimming to soccer and many more. It highlights Olympic athletes before, during, and their competitions. It's comprised of relationships between teammates, rivals, and Olympians and working class men. And it focuses on relationships that are new, established, and broken. There is a little bit of something for everybody within these pages.

Hot Shots by Michael P. Thomas

Beau has always dreamed of going to the Olympics, but not for the reason that you may be thinking. No. Beau has always been attracted to athletic men, and what's better than an Olympian? Focused on his aspirations of bedding an Olympian, Beau has tried his hand at a variety of sports with no success. Then his mother informs him of his cousin in Luxembourg – a two-time Olympic medalist in shooting. Beau packs up

and journeys to Luxembourg to learn the craft of shooting from his cousin Marcel. Although his focus isn't what it should be, he does have talent. When a strange attraction forms between the pair and Beau discovers the family connection may not actually be what it seems, Beau has to decide if falling in love is worth giving up his Olympic dream.

This story is cute. Beau is a fun character. I loved his reasoning from the beginning. His aspiration of being a boy toy to an Olympian is such a different twist on Olympic dreams. It's a very sweet story of growing up and discovering that dreams can change. I have to say that I was a little icked for a minute by the family connection, but keep in mind that everything is not always as it seems and issues were worked out and tied up with a nice little bow. All in all the storytelling was a little drawn out, but not too terribly badly. It's still a good story. *4 stars*

Into the Deep by Nico Jaye

Meeting a beautiful, red-headed bartender was hardly on John Sloane's to do list while in London diving for the U.S. Men's Diving team. But one glance at Blake Gallagher and John knew he had no choice. Even after Blake turned him down, John couldn't stop thinking about him. There is something about the sexy Brit that John can't deny, not even with the Olympic Games facing him. When a series of coincidences puts them in each other's path again and gives them a second chance, John is sure that Blake is his destiny and, despite their differences and John's focus on diving and his Olympic dream, he won't let the Brit run away this time.

This is a very adorable story of destiny in the middle of chaos. I really like the realist in Blake; it makes it that much sweeter when everything that he believed in the beginning is proven wrong. Personally, I would have liked to see more of this story – the building of the relationship, in particular. I understand that it's a short story, but I would have liked to experience that getting to know each other stage that was skipped. I did enjoy the feel good, almost fairy tale quality of this story – boy meets boy, boy is too good for boy, boys fall in love and live happily ever after anyway – but with a modern, Olympic twist. Well done. *4.5 stars*

The Quad by Kelly Rand

Kevin Chamberlain, nineteen-year-old Olympic figure skater, has one problem. The quad. Kevin has landed the quad in his routine before, but he's not confident enough with it. He's not expecting to medal, but he wants to do his career best for the people of his hometown who helped send him to the Olympics. But with the added pressure of the Olympics, Kevin isn't sure the quad is a possibility. When his coach's son, Luka, convinces Kevin that all he needs is to relax and stop over thinking it, Kevin knows it's easier said than done. But Luka has a plan, a sure fire way that Kevin couldn't say no to even if he wanted to.

This story was okay, although I would have liked more interaction between Kevin and Luka other than sex. I didn't really feel much of a connection between them. The intimacy felt more like a job, a strategy to help Kevin focus. I mean the kid is nineteen and pretty lonely all-around, so I can see why he would have attached to Luka so quickly, but I would have liked it to feel like more than good strategy. And the ending was just okay. Again, I didn't feel a real connection between Kevin and Luka, so the ending just sort of fizzled for me. This is not a story that I would catch myself reading again, just for the heck of it. *3.5 stars*

Lightning in a Bottle by Sarah Madison

When Jake Stanford's lifelong trainer reveals a fight with cancer, Jake is willing to put his Olympic dreams aside to help Jim. But Jim won't hear of it and has already lined up a new trainer for Jake – none other than Jake's ex-boyfriend Rich Evans. Their painful past makes it hard for Jake to trust Rich again, but as time

goes by, he sees glimpses of the boy he once knew, and those feelings that Jake once thought were dead start resurfacing as strong as ever. But when secrets and lies are uncovered, Jake and Rich must figure out a way to work together without harming Jake's chance to compete in the Olympics, secure Jim's job, and maybe find a way to love again.

This was slated to be my favorite story of the bunch, and then it ended...just ended. Jake and Rich are wonderful characters. Both are damaged and have been lied to and manipulated into the loneliness they've both suffered for the past four years. Their story is one of rediscovery and trust. It's a great story with a good plot, fabulous secondary characters, lovable animals, and even a Pinky and the Brain reference. I mean, come on. It's got a little bit of everything. It would have been a 5-star read if not for the abrupt ending. I have so many questions. What happened with Jake's dad? What about Jim? What about the Olympics? It could have been my favorite story, and it does still rate up there within this anthology, but I really wish it would have been just a little bit longer and the story completed with no unanswered questions. *4 stars*

Swimming the Distance by Annabeth Albert

Brohden Petrov, Olympic distance swimmer, is favored to win the 1500 meter freestyle swim in London. But he wouldn't have even made it to London without the love and support of his boyfriend, Kyle. If only he could tell the world that. Under the pretense of protecting Kyle from the media, Brohden has denied having anyone special in his life and has gone as far as denying being gay at all. But in reality, Brohden isn't sure if he's ready to come out to the world. Kyle is tired of hiding, tired of waiting, and he's not sure if he can handle the secrets and lies of Brohden's professional life. Will the Olympics be a time to celebrate or will it be Brohden and Kyle's downfall?

Swimming the Distance is a wonderful story of love, dedication, secrets, lies, and confusion. Brohden and Kyle are a wonderful couple with problems that follow them to the biggest competition of Brohden's life. Brohden's personal life creeps into his professional life and tough decisions have to be made. I love that Brohden is a world class athlete who still gets nervous and stumbles over his words when interviewed. It makes him all the more real. I love that Kyle is supportive, but still has his own beliefs and goals. And the journey to self-acceptance is an uplifting one. Swimming the Distance is all around a great short. *5 stars*

Shoot for Gold by Whitley Gray

Matt Justice is at the top of his game and favored to win gold in London in the shooting events. But an unfortunate accident involving lack of concentration, rain, and scaffolding puts his chances in jeopardy. Lucky for him, Levi Wolf, M.D. was nearby when Matt injured himself. Patching Matt's face up and relieving the tension in his neck put was only the beginning for this pair. The immediate connection between them gives way to a night of passion that gives Matt hope that something may come of their tentative relationship. But Levi's past haunts him and has for the past three years. Levi has to decide if he can leave the past behind him in order to move on before he loses any chance he may have had with Matt.

I really liked this story. For one, both characters are in their mid to late thirties so they have experience, maturity, and painful pasts. Matt and Levi's story is one of risk. Taking a leap of faith to see what may or may not happen and risk gaining everything or losing it all. For such a short story, I thought the character building was superb. I really felt a connection between both MCs and liked Norm, Matt's roommate, who was hilarious, by the way. The story was a little angsty, believable, and so sweet. Overall, it's one of my favorites of this anthology. *5 stars*

An Olympic Goal by K-lee Klein

Soccer teammates in their everyday public life, lovers behind closed doors, and rivals on opposing Olympic teams, Swiss native Sebastian Fehr and Spanish native Fernando Marquez are facing off in the semi-finals, competing for Olympic glory and personal bragging rights. When Sebastian is injured on the field Fernando wants nothing more than to comfort his boyfriend, but he must remain unaffected in order to keep their secret. But when Sebastian doesn't return to the field, fear and worry battle for Fernando's attention as he tries to focus on winning a game that will put him a step closer to Olympic glory.

This is an okay story. I liked Sebastian and Fernando a lot. And I love the author's knowledge of soccer. It's a cute story of an established couple who are forced to remain in the closet due to their chosen profession and the trials they face for that very reason. It's a good story, but I think I would have liked some conflict. There were a couple times where jealousy could have played a role, but they both fizzled out. It is a sweet story with no conflict, no angst, and is tied up with a nice, neat bow at the end. I just would have liked something...more added into the mix of this one. *3.75 stars*

***Tumbling Dreams* by Kaje Harper**

Tyler Bannichek has dreamed of going to the Olympics for as long as he can remember, and now that he's made the U.S. Men's Gymnastics Team, he can't let anything stand in his way. Not even a spinal cord compression. Working through the pain is second nature. But when his best friend and roommate, Eli Nelson, announces that he's moving out and he won't sit by and watch Tyler abuse himself and possibly end up paralyzed, Tyler finds himself at a loss. It's an impossible choice to have to choose between his lifelong dream and the man that he has grown to love as more than a best friend. As training gets more intense and Tyler struggles with excruciating pain daily, he has to decide if his decision to compete in the Games in London is worth further injury and losing out on a possibility of more with Eli.

Save the best for last, and that's saying something because this anthology is full of great stories. But *Tumbling Dreams* is my favorite of the bunch. The writing is engaging from the very beginning. Tyler and Eli are lovely. This is mostly Tyler's story and his struggle between his dreams, his health, and his love for Eli. I love their friendship – the love and support at a time where they are both obviously struggling between anger and fear. In just a few short pages, Kaje Harper creates a roller coaster ride of fear, anticipation, love, and acceptance. I absolutely adore this tale of friends to lovers and all the angst in between. *5 stars*

All in all, this anthology has been a joy to read. For one, I love the Olympics and have a tendency to watch every chance I get. Second, the variety of sports played throughout each story is fun and interesting. And finally, the authors did a great job bringing each character to life in such a short amount of time. These stories were all good, some great. If you are a lover of the Olympic Games, if you love sports, if you just love the men who play sports, this anthology is for you.

Marlobo says

Overall: 2.5 Stars

Hot Shots by Michael P. Thomas - 1.5 stars

Into the Deep by Nico Jaye - 2 stars

The Quad by Kelly Rand - 1.5 stars

Lightning in a Bottle by Sarah Madison - 2.5 stars

Swimming the Distance by Annabeth Albert -3.5 stars

Shoot for the Gold by Whitley Gray - 3 stars

An Olympic Goal by K-lee Klein -2.5 stars

Tumbling Dreams by Kaje Harper - 3.5 stars

Tailtiu says

Swimming the Distance by Annabeth Albert : 3,5*

Into the Deep by Nico Jaye : 3,5*

Shoot for the Gold by Whitley Gray : 3,5*

Tumbling Dreams by Kaje Harper: 3,5*

Lightning in a Bottle/ Fool's Gold by Sarah Madison : 3*

Hot Shots by Michael P. Thomas : 3*

An Olympic Goal by K-lee Klein : 3*

The Quad by Kelly Rand : 3*

Jerry says

I thought every story was either very good or great. Many brought tears to my eyes. Loved the intensity. Nice group of authors.

Pamela Su says

As is common with most anthologies, my enjoyment of the stories vary.

Hot Shots by Michael P. Thomas - Amusing story. There's a lightheartedness to this that captured my fancy.

Into the Deep by Nico Jaye - Loved this story. There's a real chemistry between John (J.D.) and Blake which sizzles on page. Very nicely developed story.

The Quad by Kelly Rand - I liked the story. The relationship seems to develop a bit fast, but it was still enjoyable to read.

Lightning in a Bottle by Sarah Madison - This didn't work for me. It has an interesting premise but the development of the romance left me cold.

Swimming the Distance by Annabeth Albert - The author succeeds in capturing the difficulty of being gay while under the public eye. I was moved by the story.

Shoot for the Gold by Whitley Gray - This was an alright story for me. I didn't particularly connect to the characters.

An Olympic Goal by K-lee Klein - Not one of my favourites in this anthology.

Tumbling Dreams by Kaje Harper - I started out not liking the story but I was soon drawn in. This is a fantastic story which highlights some of the sacrifices a person can make for the sake of being in the Olympics. The relationship between Tyler and Eli is wonderfully depicted here.
